

Joppa/Joppatowne Community Council

Meeting Number 115 (10-11)

October 3, 2011

The Joppa/Joppatowne Community meetings are held the first Monday of each month at the Joppatowne High School beginning at 7:00 P.M. Everyone is welcome to attend and participate. Meeting Number 115 was called to order at 7:12 p.m. by Chairperson Paula Mullis, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Community Council members were introduced by the chair, Paula Mullis. Members present were Paula Mullis, Vincent Rabenau, Gloria Moon, Ron Sollod, Bob Frisch, Betty Byrne, Jim Lyons, Yvonne Baldwin, JoAnn M. Macdonald, and Doris Carey. Paula Mullis gave a special welcome to Senator Nancy Jacobs; Colonel Orlando Ortiz, APG Garrison Commander; Mr. Tim McNamara, Deputy to the Garrison Commander; Delegate Glen Glass; Councilman Dion Guthrie; and Captain Chris Swain, Commander of Southern Precinct of the Harford County Sheriff's Office. Minutes of the September meeting were approved.

The Sheriff's Office / Community Policing Report

Captain Chris Swain stated that he had no traditional report. The records management system is continuing to be revamped. He said that the new Southern Precinct building is progressing well. He also mentioned that there were five burglaries in the Joppa area. The offenders were known to the victims. The same was said about an auto theft in the area. As a result of questions by the community, Captain Swain said the Southern Precinct will be open around the end of January or the beginning of February 2012. Several questions were asked by community members concerning potential traffic hazards at key intersections where traffic lights were out during the hurricane. Questions were asked about deputies directing traffic at Wegman's, speeding vehicles, and drugs in the community. Captain Swain said the department has had an after action meeting and pledged to do a better job in the future concerning these issues. He was also asked about increased problems at the high school during sporting events. He was not aware of any increased problems at the school and will check with the school. He appreciated the audience's kindness with his explanation of the issues.

Chairperson Paula Mullis introduced Col Ortiz who introduced his deputy, Jim McNamara. Col Ortiz stated that on the Waste to Energy plant issue, he could only speak from the Army's perspective. He said that it is most important that the Army team work with its neighbors. Breathing new life on a facility is a complex thing, and the mission that takes place in the Army must be supported. Col Ortiz said that the

Army had regular and meaningful dialogue with the County. He also said that 2016 is when a new solid waste facility or upgrade is needed for the WTE plant. Col Ortiz also stated that there will be an energy plant on post to supply the needs of the Army. The Army is very concerned about environmental stewardship and environmental safety is considered very important. In response to the question what happens if the partnership with the County dies, Col Ortiz answered that the Army would have to consider having its own plan. Councilman Guthrie said he had been in many meetings with the Colonel and understands a new plant will be three and a half times as large as the present plant. After 20 years, most plants are obsolete. The cost to rehab is prohibitive. After answering many more questions from community members, Col Ortiz was thanked for sharing the Army's position.

Paula Mullis asked for a representative from the County to come to the council meeting and answer questions that concerned the community about the proposed waste transfer station. She was told that the county has no definite plans for the land site at this time and no one would be attending the meeting.

County Council and Community Update from Councilman Dion Guthrie.

Councilman Guthrie said he learned, as others did, about the purchase of the former golf driving range by the administration after the fact. He said the administration has the authority to purchase whatever and whenever they would like. However, with the lay of the land, he could not understand how a solid waste transfer station would work at the proposed site. At present, Councilman Guthrie is hearing that there is no schedule for a building. Plans for building a transfer station must go through the County Council. The Councilman talked briefly about the solid waste plant that was to be in the Edgewood area. With strong community opposition, no waste plant was put in the building which is now Kohl's distribution center. At peak seasons, Kohl's will employ approximately 2,000 people. In answer to a citizen's question, the councilman said that the county executive can introduce the solid waste transfer station project to the county council at anytime. If the project gets to this point, community members will need to pack the county council to show their disapproval of this project. One angry community member stated that the Joppa area is considered a septic tank for the whole county. Dion said he has also introduced a bill to set up a task force to study the livability code of Harford County. The code will force people to keep up their property.

Senator Nancy Jacobs said that she introduced legislation to get a tax break for those residents living in the neighborhood near a solid waste to energy plant. The bill was killed by Delegate Rick Impallaria. In the next session, she plans to resubmit the bill.

Sue Heselton noted that other county council members do not live in the area where the trash will be thrown. We do not want the waste in our area. She suggested the issue must continuously be brought before the county council. She also suggested that tax payers have some input on what purchases are being made by the county.

Gloria Moon stated the draft Master Plan will be presented to the public around October 10. There will be a workshop by P&Z on October 20, 7:00 p.m. Gloria will chair a committee formed at the community council to get answers for the community and share them at the meetings so that everyone can be well informed about what is happening concerning the potential waste transfer station. The committee will do research and get solid facts. Gloria feels that instead of a waste facility, Joppa needs a senior center, and that property would be a good place for it.

A community member suggested that community members flood the County Executive's office with phone calls and tell him we do not want the waste transfer facility in our part of the county.

Bob Frisch, Board of Education member, said that half of the county's property tax goes to the school system. He feels that Joppatowne High School has the worst facilities in the County. He is working to get what is needed in the schools in this area before other schools get enhancements that are not necessarily needed. If community members have issues or concerns about the school system give him a call.

Delegate Glen Glass said he is working hard and fighting for the voters.

Jim Lyons mentioned the recent article in the Aegis concerning an audit of the county's volunteer fire and EMS companies. He said that the fire company has been involved in an audit for the 15 years which he has been a part of it. He said that the residential sprinkler bill has been passed. Jim Lyons and Ron Sollod said the sprinkler alarm system saves lives. Ron also mentioned CPR classes that will be offered to the public at the fire company. Ron also stated that daylight saving time will begin November 6. He also mentioned that the fire hall has been rented for a dance for breast cancer awareness this weekend.

Betty Byrne reminded the community of bingo and lunches that are fundraisers for the fire volunteer fire and EMS companies.

JoAnn Macdonald and Yvonne Baldwin both thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and for discussing the issues. They look forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting. Yvonne Baldwin reminded everyone of Joppa's 300 year birthday in 2012.

Paula Mullis told the audience that there is strength in numbers. She encouraged all to put voices together and let the elected officials know their feelings on issues that involve the community. She asked community members to attend the local council meetings on a continuous basis.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Minutes by Doris Carey